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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 003198

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/03/2015

TAGS: MARR SU TU NATO

SUBJECT: TURKEY CONSIDERING NATO AIRLIFT FOR AFRICAN UNION  
IN DARFUR

REF: A. STATE 104289 (NOTAL)

1B. ANKARA 2697

Classified By: Acting Counselor for Political-Military Affairs Maggie N  
ardi for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On June 6, PolMilOff called on MFA NATO Military Affairs Head of Department Alper Coskun to discuss ref a demarche. Coskun responded that Turkey wants to approach this issue constructively. He said that Turkey understands that this would not be a Berlin-plus operation, but he cautioned it cannot become one "de facto." He explained that the NATO-EU cooperation problem is on the Turks' mind and will continue to be as the planning progresses. Turkey has no problem with the EU staff already at SHAPE working this issue. But Turkey would be concerned if the EU were to augment the staff with a Greek Cypriot for purposes of this mission or if an EU LNO from Cyprus was assigned to a potential regional HQ for this mission. The NATO security agreement would also be an issue for the Turks vis-a-vis planning.

¶2. (C) Coskun could not provide insight as to the Turkish military's view on providing airlift assets. PolMilOff followed up on this issue June 7 with COL Kasim Erdem, TGS/J-5, but TGS has provided no substantive response as yet.

¶3. (C) Comment: Coskun's comments indicate that the GOT is thinking ahead on this issue with an eye to being constructive. We interpret his statement that "we are not guarding the fence on this" as evidence that Turkey does not want to see Darfur become a battleground for the NATO-EU cooperation problem. Turkey's agreement to hold informal NATO-EU meetings (albeit void of operational discussion) is further evidence that the trend in Ankara is to try to lean forward, though within the constraints of the Cyprus problem (ref b).

¶4. (C) Comment, cont.: As for Turkey providing airlift, TGS has also received a special plea from DSACEUR for Turkish helos to remain in Afghanistan for the September elections and is also occupied with the logistics of bringing their troops and materiel home after ISAF VII ends in August. Our sense is that the Foreign Ministry wants this to happen but we do not know if it can sway the military. End comment.

¶5. (U) Khartoum minimize considered.

MOORE